

NEWSRAIL

JUNE 2000

Print Post Approved PP349018/00059 \$6.00



Featuring:

THE MILLENNIUM AURORA'S VISIT TO VICTORIA



Volume 28

Number 6

JUNE 2000



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NEWSRAIL thank the people and
organisations who contributed to this
month's issue.

I Breydon, I Stanley, R Parsons, I Sebire,
M Schrader, DOI, Bayside Trains,
National Express and Freight Australia.

ADVERTISING

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Mailed flat, with supplements not
provided with across-the-counter copies.

May - April - \$71

November - April - \$36

All subscriptions expire with the April
issue. Write to ARHS Membership
Officer, Box 5177AA, GPO Melbourne
3001, for subscriptions and details of
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NEWSRAIL is published by the Australian
Railway Historical Society Victorian
Division Inc. and details Victorian railway
happenings and related items. Opinions
expressed in NEWSRAIL are not necessarily
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ISSN 0 310-7477.

Closing date for News, Articles and
Photographs: twenty-fourth of each
month.

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NEWSRAIL

ESTABLISHED 1973

THE MAGAZINE OF THE AUSTRALIAN RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
(VICTORIAN DIVISION)

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near Derrinallum. Mon.24.4 Greg Sweeney

INSIDE FRONT COVER: 3830 and 3801 power across the Mt Emu Creek bridge near Pura Pura
during a photo-stop as 4201 and 4421I bring up the rear. Mon.24.4 Peter J O Ralph

GENERAL NEWS

A monthly round-up of Victorian railway news and events

CALENDAR

JUNE

ANNIVERSARIES

- 8th, 1990: Restoration of Sale - Bairnsdale passenger services after rebuild of Stratford bridge. (10)
- 15th, 1985: Boom barriers replace hand worked gates at Lilydale. (15)
- 15th, 1995: Sprinter services to Traralgon commenced. (5)
- 16th, 1920: Opening of Mittyack to Kulwin line. (80)
- 16th, 1995: New railway station opened at Traralgon. (5)
- 17th, 1890: Opening of Molesworth to Cathkin line. (110)
- 19th, 1985: Loco R766 hauled first *Melbourne Limited* trip to Bendigo. (15)
- 26th, 1905: Opening of Welshpool to Port Welshpool and Stawell to Grampians lines. (95)
- 27th, 1925: Opening of Merbein to Yelta line. (75)
- 29th, 1980: Princes Bridge's platforms renumbered as Flinders Street. (20)
- 1950: Newport Workshops commenced assembly of 280 hp Walker diesel railcars. (50)
- 1995: Standard gauge Western grain lines in use. (5)

JULY

ANNIVERSARIES

- 1st, 1940: Closure of Lal Lal to Lal Lal Racecourse line. (60)
- 4th, 1910: Opening of Mildura to Merbein line. (90)
- 7th, 1875: Opening of Bowser to Everton line. (125)
- 9th, 1995: *Classic Restaurant Train* commenced operation on trip from Spencer Street to Ballarat and return. (5)
- 18th, 1890: Opening of Huon Vale to Bolga line. (110)
- 20th, 1990: Loco R707 named *City of Melbourne*. (10)
- 23rd, 1995: BS and BRS carriages finally removed from V/Line service. (5)
- 29th, 1915: Opening of Murrayville to Pinnaroo (SA) line. (85)
- 29th, 1965: Closure of Lilydale to Warburton line. (35)
- 1960: Clyde Engineering commenced building second batch of S class diesel-electric locos, 310-317. (40)

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HIGH SPEED RAIL ROUTE TO MELBOURNE REVEALED

Currently, the Speedrail consortium is working towards its goal of constructing and operating a high speed rail link between Sydney and Canberra.

One key input into this private venture before it can proceed is the level of financial assistance from the Federal Government, which is currently being considered.

If built, the Sydney - Canberra link would deliver passengers from Canberra Airport to Sydney Central Station in 84 minutes, including stops at Sydney's domestic and international airport terminals.

Other possible high speed links envisaged by the consortium after Sydney - Canberra is an extension to Melbourne and a link between Sydney and Brisbane. The Melbourne link could be running within 10 to 15 years, whilst the Brisbane link could be completed within 30 years.

On Mon.17.4 Leighton Holdings, one of the partners in the Speedrail consortium, released the following details on the proposed Melbourne high speed service:

- The trip from central Melbourne to central Sydney would take 3½ hours.
- A business class ticket would cost as much as an economy air fare.
- The Melbourne link would be an extension of the Canberra high speed line and would pass through Yass, Wagga Wagga, Albury/Wodonga, Benalla, Seymour and Melbourne Airport.

Leighton Holdings indicated that the entire Melbourne - Canberra - Sydney - Brisbane high speed project could generate 75 000 permanent jobs, keep the equivalent of 50 000 cars off the road, and contribute \$11 billion to the economy if built (*Age*, Tues.18.4).

AUTOMATING LYDIARD STREET GATES

On Fri.22.4, it was officially announced by Ballarat West MLA, Ms Karen Overington, that \$500 000 has been made available to automate the interlocked railway gates at Lydiard Street, Ballarat.

The majority of this funding, \$400 000, will be in the form of grants

from VicTrack, Ministry of Transport and Heritage Victoria.

It will take 18 weeks to complete the project once site works commence (no date as to when these works will commence has been announced). During this time, the crossing will be closed and road traffic will be diverted - along Seymour Street and Doveton Crescent in the south bound direction and Ararat or Market Streets in the north bound.

The announcement ends over 10 years of debate (that stated when Ballarat Yard was rationalised) as to whether the gates should be retained.

Once the gates at Ballarat are automated, the mechanically interlocked gates at Kyneton will be the last of their type in country Victoria.

ADELAIDE BUDGET FARE WITHDRAWN

Great Southern Railway withdrew the \$30 *Overland* budget fare between Melbourne and Adelaide on Sat.1.4.

Since this date, the following coach class fares have applied:

Type	Fare
Adult - One way	\$67
Adult - Return	\$108*
Student - One way	\$45
Child - One way	\$32
Pensioner - One way	\$29

*This fare has been advertised in the press as the \$54 fare between the two capitals.

COUNTRYLINK PASSENGER SERVICES SUSPENDED

On Wed.12.4 Countrylink announced the following service changes:

- The temporary suspension of the Sydney - Griffith weekend loco hauled rail service from the above date and the introduction of a replacement road coach service. At a date to be announced, Countrylink will use Xplorer railcars to restore the Griffith rail service.

- The Broken Hill train was withdrawn and replaced by a XPT service to Dubbo connecting with road coaches to Broken Hill.

In the near future, Countrylink Broken Hill customers will be booked on either the *Indian Pacific* or *Ghan* (of which there are three direct services per week).

NORTH-EAST PARALLEL RUNNING



- : Above: R761-R711 approach Wangaratta while 3801-3830 are way back in the distance. Fri.21.4
- : Below: Approaching Violet Town 3801-3830 are just in front of R761-R711 Both photos Peter Foote



GENERAL NEWS

In the long term, it is planned to restore a Countrylink rail service to Broken Hill in 2002 using the three XPT type carriages ordered in 1999 at a cost of \$12 million.

STUDY INTO RESTORING MILDURA RAIL PASSENGER SERVICE ANNOUNCED

On Thurs.9.3 the Transport Minister, Mr Peter Batchelor, announced that a community reference group had been formed to assist the state government in its investigation of the options available to restore a rail based passenger service to Mildura.

The purpose of the group is to provide local input into the Mildura Passenger Train Feasibility Study with a number of objectives, including:

- Reviewing the performance of the coach services introduced since the withdrawal of the *Vineland* in 1993.
- Assessing the commercial viability and impact on regional economies of resuming a rail based passenger service.

The passenger train study will be closely co-ordinated with the government's North West Freight Transport Study, which is investigating the most effective and efficient means of transporting goods into and out of the Sunraysia region.

A report on the outcomes of the Mildura Passenger Train Feasibility Study is expected to be presented to the Government by June 2000.

WORK STARTS ON STORED CARS

A number of V/Line Passenger peak services are currently experiencing overcrowding as patronage continues to grow. In order to overcome this problem, two cars that have been in long term storage are being returned to traffic, namely BS215 and ACZ256 which were pulled out of the East Block at Newport on Mon.1.5 and taken across to the workshops to undergo an overhaul. They entered the shops on Wed.3.5 and it is believed that they will be outshopped some time in the middle of the year.

FOOTSCRAY STATION REDEVELOPMENT

Maribyrnong City Council has called expressions of interest to facilitate the redevelopment of the Footscray railway

station precinct covering about seven hectares in central Footscray.

The project aspires to produce the most innovative and successful transit-orientated mixed-use development precinct and modal interchange. This is envisaged to be one of the most strategic developments in the revitalisation of Footscray.

ALICE SPRINGS - DARWIN LINK

Construction work on the Alice Springs to Darwin standard gauge rail link should commence in May, said Mr Dick Cheney, Chief Executive of Halliburton, the partner company of the consortium leader Brown and Root. All major hurdles had been overcome, with only the technical details of the contracts to be finalised.

The private sector and the Federal, South Australia and Northern Territory governments are jointly funding the \$1.2 billion Alice Springs to Darwin Line. This is an extension to the existing *Ghan* link.

The railway would take about three years to complete. The work is expected to be carried out in several areas at once, with the focus shifting according to the weather conditions and logistics. (AAP)

PRIVATE OPERATORS JUDGED

The private operators running Melbourne's rail and tram networks have been judged and either received bonuses or fined.

Track Record, a new government bulletin found that overall, the train and tram services improved between August and December 1999, but the tram operators were unable to meet the Victorian Government targets on punctuality and reliability.

Under the franchise agreement that the operators have with the government, they pay fines for failing to meet government targets or receive bonuses if the targets are exceeded.

Train services showed improvements with Hillside Trains, run by Melbourne Transport Enterprises, receiving \$1.13 million in bonuses and Bayside Trains run by National Express receiving \$722,400.

On the other hand, V/Line Passenger, run by National Express was fined \$55,100.

In the Tram arena, Swanston Trams, run by National Express, was fined

\$1.16 million and Yarra Trams, run by Metrolink, was fined \$248,800.

While punctuality of both trains and trams improved over the second half of 1999, punctuality is defined as arrival at the destination no more than 59 seconds before and no more than six minutes after the time designated on the timetable.

At the end of the year 97% of the suburban trains ran on time compared with 94% in the first half of the year. With trams 75% ran on time by the end of the year compared with 62% in the first half of the year.

Train cancellations dropped by about half that recorded in the first quarter to 0.6% in the second half of the year. Tram cancellations fell from 0.9% in the first quarter to 0.6% in the second half of the year. Swanston Trams were consistently worst than Yarra Trams on cancellations.

The Government paid the operators base subsidies and concession fare 'top ups' to the value of \$126.1 million from August to December 1999. The base subsidy is the money the government pays to operate the service while the concession payments are the difference between the full fare and the concession fare.

NATIONAL EXPRESS

National Express Group Australia recently advised a new organisational structure for the business within the Group and the new appointments are:

Infrastructure Team: Mr Tom Sargent Infrastructure manager responsible for the Theiss infrastructure contract for trains and tram, track access agreements, including Freight Australia, and control of infrastructure investment projects.

Fleet Team: Mr Jonathan Bridgewood, Director of Fleet Engineering, responsible for the procurement of new trains and trams, refurbishment of existing fleets and managing of outsourced rolling stock maintenance contracts.

Human Resources Team: Mr Geoff Thomas, Head of Human Resources, responsible for employee relations, training and development and general human resources issues across the three business units.

Operations Team: Mr Bernie Carolan, Operations Director, responsible for trams, trains, safety across all sections and customer service.

GENERAL NEWS

Trains Team: Mr Wayne Walsh, General Manager Trains, under Operations Team, covers customer service and stations for South (Pakenham, Cranbourne, Frankston and Sandringham lines), West (Williamstown, Werribee, St Albans, Broadmeadows and Upfield lines), Melbourne (three underground loop stations and Spencer St), Driver manager, Performance manager and Franchise manager.

Trams Team: The General manager Trams to be appointed, responsible for depots Brunswick, Essendon, Glenhuntly, Malvern, Performance and Franchise areas.

V/Line Team: Mr Geoff Smithwick, Managing Director, has responsible for business Eastern, North, Western, NorthEast, SouthWest, Train Service and Franchise areas.

TIGER LINE REVIVAL

Following the announcement of \$52 million to upgrade the Donald to Ouyen line, the residents of the West Wimmera have drafted a petition to revive the closed east-west 'Tiger' line from Natimuk to Carpolac and link it with the old line south through Balmoral to Portland. The Balmoral line closed in 1979 and the Carpolac line closed in 1986. (*Wimmera Times*)

MILLIPEDES SLOW TRAINS

While it is well known that the standard gauge services through the Adelaide Hills can be restricted due to plagues of millipedes across the track it is unusual for these occurrences to happen in Victoria.

V/Line passenger services between Melbourne and Ballarat were recently delayed due to a millipede plague between Bacchus Marsh and Ballan during the first week of April. Delays to the evening services were up to an hour due to slow running over this section of the line. (*Ballarat Courier*)

WARRNAMBOOL

There has been a call for a platform to be built to service Deakin University, Warrnambool Campus, some five kilometres on the up side of Warrnambool. This would allow students from the area east of Warrnambool to Geelong easier access to the University. (3VW)

VICTORIAN BUDGET

The Premier and Treasurer, Mr Steve Bracks, unveiled the Budget on Tues. 2.4., with the Victorian Government to spend \$510 million on transport

initiatives over three years. The rail and tram component of the transport initiative include:

- \$20 million for a rapid transit link between Melbourne and the airport.
- \$80 million for fast rail links to Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong and Traralgon.
- \$70 million for metropolitan train and tram line extensions. \$12.4 million to employ 100 more rail station staff and 100 tram conductors.

The airport link feasibility study is a follow on of the original proposal by the Kennett government, who did not allocate money towards it. Following the feasibility study it is proposed the link will be built with the assistance of the private enterprise in financing and building the project.

The suburban electrified rail lines will be extended to Craigieburn, South Morang and East Cranbourne. It is also proposed to introduce metropolitan 'flyer' trains to reduce travel times on the Frankston, Dandenong and Ringwood lines.

The expansion of the tram network includes extension of the East Burwood tram to Knox and the Mont Albert tram to Box Hill. \$10 million is proposed to be spent on improving road and rail access to the Port of Melbourne.

SPENCER STREET STATION REDEVELOPMENT

The Minister of Transport, Mr Peter Batchelor, recently announced that Mr Richard Parker has been appointed

interim project director for the Spencer Street station development. Mr Parker is Chief Executive of the Melbourne City Link Authority and will be responsible to draw up the project team.

The station redevelopment will be undertaken through private public partnership and will include the commercial development of the site.

The principal task of the team is to develop a master plan for the West End precinct together with a concept plan for the station consulting with Melbourne City Council, users, residents, the Docklands Authority and transport franchisees. It is proposed to call tenders later this year.

DAYLIGHT OVERLAND SERVICE BEGINS

The start of the six-month trial of a daylight service for the *Overland* commenced on Sun.7.5 from Adelaide to Melbourne with a launch held at Keswick Station including a hot breakfast.

The *Overland* departs Adelaide at 09 00; Murray Bridge 10 39, Bordertown 12 33, Dimboola 14 23, Horsham 14 49, Ararat 16 06, North Shore 18 34 and arriving Melbourne 19 45. The service operates on Sunday, Monday, Thursday and Friday. The overnight *Overland* service from Adelaide is now cancelled.

The first class fare has been reduced to \$99 from Adelaide to Melbourne with a special return fare of \$199. The coach fare has been reduced to \$54 with a dedicated lounge car added to the train for the Coach passengers.

G517 leads the up Apex goods away from Kilmore East on Tues.18.4 Matt Robinson



Welcome to the MILLENNIUM AURORA TOUR

THURSDAY 20 - FRIDAY 21 APRIL 2000



R711 leads S313 out of Riggs Creek Loop after crossing the up Albury pass. as they head for Wodonga. Fri.21.4

Late in October 1999, the New South Wales Rail Transport Museum (NSWRTM) invited the respective Victorian rail preservation operators and organisations to operate broad gauge steam trains on their behalf over the 2000 Easter weekend.

Initial planning commenced immediately and the ARHS and ARE were invited to participate with Steamrail being given the right to be train operator on the proposed Good Friday parallel run from Wodonga to Melbourne.

The ARHS and ARE were to act as joint tour organisers with the ARE handling the bookings for both the Good Friday parallel run and the day tour with the two 38s to Ararat on Easter Monday. The ARHS would co-ordinate the planning of the Easter Monday tour leaving Steamrail to co-ordinate the planning of the parallel run.

It sounded easy, but in today's railway operation of train orders, minimal crossing loops and lack of staff at stations enroute, it was obvious that problems could arise. Initially it

Steamrail Victoria, in conjunction with the ARHS and the ARE operated two special trains to Wodonga on 'Black Thursday', 20 April and Good Friday 21 April, to return alongside the Millennium Aurora hauled by 3801 and 3830, the first double-headed 38 class hauled train to visit Victoria since 1973

Julian Insall

was planned that Benalla be the focal point during the parallel run as both trains would need to take water there. The yard was rationalised in mid-1999 and reduced to a shunting point for Freight Australia goods trains as well as a branch outlet for the Oaklands line with the result no trains could cross there. Months of negotiations between Vic Track, Freight Australia, NSWRTM and Steamrail proved fruitless so a decision was made to revise the proposed day's train running.

A further problem was the running of the mid-afternoon up Albury pass., departing Albury at 14 40 with arrival at Spencer Street at 18 10. As well, the down Albury pass., departing Mel-

bourne at 09 20 to arrive at Albury at 13 05 made it necessary to work around the V/Line Passenger movements because it was necessary that these trains not be delayed.

Adrian Ponton from Freight Australia suggested the special train operate at a maximum speed of 100 km/h non-stop from Wodonga to Euroa. This would enable it to clear Riggs Creek

Loop by 14 45 and allow the up pass. to depart Wodonga with a train order to Riggs Creek Loop. Adequate time would then be available for a halt at Euroa for a photo-stop with a second stop at Seymour.

At Seymour the two R classes would take water at the Seymour Railway Heritage centre whilst the 14 40 up Albury pass. would run through and the special could then depart at 17 45 and continue the parallel run.

The operational plan therefore was to depart Wodonga at 13 10 and parallel the 38s to Euroa. There the first photo-stop would be staged and then a wait until the 38s were topped up with water after which the trains would proceed to Seymour and a second photo-stop at the curve in the yard opposite the Seymour locomotive depot. The Rs would be watered whilst the up Albury pass. ran through and the parallel run then continue to Melbourne via Albion.

The plan for the Thursday night train to place R761 ready to return Good Friday afternoon was not as simple. Obtaining a path from Melbourne to Wodonga on the busiest rail traffic night of the year was one of the most significant achievements of the whole tour. It was not possible to depart as planned at either 18 00, 19 35 or 21 00 as initially planned and a further option of a 15 00 departure was discussed which would avoid delaying the Freight Australia goods and V/Line pass. services.

The other option was to depart at 21 30 and wait at Seymour until 02 30 to enable the up Wodonga goods to cross then proceed, following the down Wodonga goods which had crossed the up at Riggs Creek Loop.

All these plans were to no avail and the day of the tour was fast approaching. The crewing arrangements were also out of position as R761's crew would have to return on Good Friday and the proposed arrival time of 05 00 would not allow them adequate rest time before signing on again.

Finally, an agreement was reached with Freight Australia about two weeks prior to the tour in that the special would depart Spencer Street at 18 44, water at Seymour between 20 16 and 21 00, then continue to Wodonga, arriving at

23 35. The up goods would be delayed by about one and a half hours but this was rectified by Steamrail paying the necessary overtime. This very suitable arrangement was made possible through the good auspices and creativity of Freight Australia's Mark Ditterich.

Whilst these plans were falling into place, bookings for both trains were quite solid with the overnight train sold out almost a month in advance and the day train sold out with requests for bookings having to be turned away.

The *Millennium Auroa* was sold out months in advance, it accommodating only 96 passengers who paid the princely sum of \$3600 for a journey to Melbourne, then to Mildura via Castlemaine, back to Geelong, then to Portland and Dimboola. Just imagine, it is cheaper to fly around the world on a Qantas Global Explorer airfare and still have some left over to spend.

The week prior to the tour was hectic with the usual last-minute glitches arising. One major problem that was detected was that the West Coast Railway carriages had through air reservoir pipes and the Steamrail cars did not. Should the Steamrail cars lead from Wodonga, there would be no air supplied to the West Coast cars to provide water in the toilets, water fountains and buffet car. The problem was solved by having the West Coast cars lead in both directions which would necessitate a shunter being available at Wodonga.

The Steamrail Depot was particularly busy on Thursday 20.4. R711-229BRS-700BK-711BK arrived at about lunch-time, the consist being for the evening and morning trains. R711 then stabled overnight and was placed behind S313 in preparation for the following morning's train. R761 was steamed earlier in the day and spent the early afternoon making up the final consist. Both buffet cars were prepared, fully loaded and the sleeping berths set up.

R761-9VOAF-Goulburn-Werribee-Indi-Coliban-LAN2354-BRS229 departed at 1755 bound for Seymour where BK714-WAL951 would be attached to the front of the train. These

Seymour Rail Heritage Group visit Yarrawonga each Easter and here we see their lengthy train headed by T378-GM36-J515 while T320 is attached to the rear. Avenel, Fri.21.4 Both photos Peter Foote





In ever increasing shadow, 3801-3830 cool their heels waiting for other standard gauge traffic.
Seymour Loop, Fri.21.4 Peter Foote

two cars and other rollingstock had been moved to Seymour on an empty car movement with T395 on Tues.18.4. A clear path was obtained from Newport to Spencer Street and arrival was at platform 8 at 18 21. R761 was then reversed while the train examiners checked the brakes and departure was at 18 54, 10 minutes late. The run to Seymour was fast with no delays and arrival was at 20 31, 15 minutes late.

R761 cut off and took water at the Seymour Railway Heritage Centre's water tower and once completed coupled up to WAL951-BK714, which were in the dead-end opposite platform 1 and re-attached to the train. At this stage there were growing concerns that departure would be later than the scheduled 21 00 and the up Wodonga goods would be delayed, but the train controller seemed unperturbed at the 21 14 departure.

Seymour to Wodonga was achieved in a spirited fashion with a non-stop run, and the question was asked 'When was the last time an R class operated a passenger train for a non-stop 200 km?' No further time was lost and arrival was in No.3 road at Wodonga at 23 54. The up goods was waiting patiently and after completing formalities departed just after mid-night.

R761 then ran around and coupled onto the coal wagon and was then placed on the road to the loco depot and was turned prior to being stabled for the night.

The morning in Wodonga brought sunshine, rain, numerous passenger and goods trains and a hearty breakfast in the yard. Word came through that R711-S313 were working hard and were expected at Wodonga at 11 20, 15 minutes early. This caused a sigh of relief as it gave more time to complete the necessary servicing of the steam loco.

The consist arrived at 11 19 and the platform was besieged by satisfied passengers from Melbourne, most armed with videos and cameras. Both engines quickly uncoupled and R711 detached and was serviced in the locomotive roads. S313 put on a good show performing the many shunting

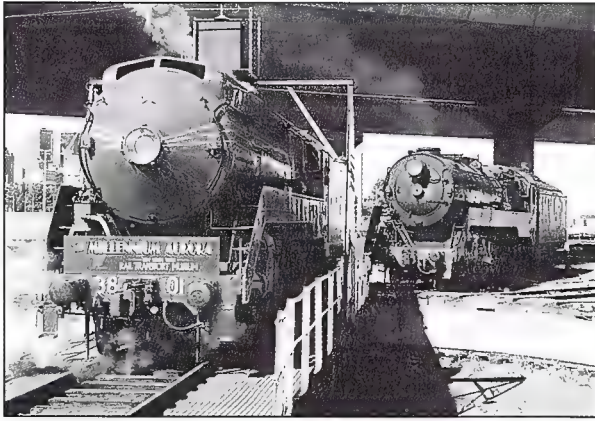
movements required to make up the final train. On completion the consist was 291CP-229BRS-714BK-711BK-700BK-14BRS-702BK-500AK-602BK-703BK-WAL951 and S313 was put to rest coupled to the sleepers and coal wagon. It subsequently returned to Seymour at 17 45 after detaching some vehicles at Benalla, the remainder taken to Seymour where they were stabled for later return on Tues. 25.4.

At 12 40, R761-R711 were attached to the front of the train while the first sound of the 38s could be heard in the distance. Not long after, the first sight of the *Millennium Aurora* was made and the engines, 3801-3830, made every effort to attract attention by whistling their way around the broad gauge station with their sleek *Southern Aurora* rollingstock and proceeded onto Wodonga loop to await the broad gauge train's departure.

Both trains were ready but unfortunately the down Melbourne pass. was late and did not arrive until 13 19, 26 minutes late. There was a further delay until 13 35 as the SRHC special pass. to Yarrawonga had not arrived at Benalla, it having also been held up by the late running V/Line pass. Almost immediately all the best laid plans were in disarray and departure was not until 13 35 and shortly after the 38s were overtaken and parallel running commenced.

Because of the late start, only one photo-stop was held for the day, that being at the Wodonga end of Euroa station. The broad gauge train stopped just before the platform and the passengers walked forward to the photo-line. The 38s had stopped a few carriage lengths behind the broad gauge train and their passengers alighted and waited until the Rs had set back. As expected, the general public interest in this day was extensive and the yard was already full of interested onlookers.

The photo-line was somewhat oversize and no doubt many photographers did not get their photos. This included the author. Passengers re-boarded and departure was at 16 00, 40



3801 uses the turntable at South Dynon Loco as 3830 enjoys the southern sun. Sat.22.4 *Ian Green*

minutes late. The 38s took water at Euroa whilst the Rs proceeded to Seymour. Arrival was delayed because the train was following the 14 40 up Albury pass. so the Seymour yard photo-stop was cancelled. Seymour was reached at 16 45 and both locos uncoupled and took water.

During the stay there was plenty of activity on both the broad and standard gauges. The delayed up Albury pass. arrived and departed, the up XPT sped by and a National Rail goods also went through.

The 38s had been delayed and did not arrive until 18 10. They took water just over the level crossing at Seymour station and it was not long thereafter that parallel running resumed after both trains departed at 18 40.

The journey was fine until one of the crew of the 38's train reported that sparks could be seen under one of the broad gauge carriages and this necessitated a stop at Kilmore East where all axle boxes and bogies were inspected but no problem could be found. Not long after departure from Kilmore

East it was heard that 3830 had done a bearing and its train would have to limp to Melbourne.

The broad gauge train continued, stopping at Broadmeadows to set down passengers and as it was established that the 38s were then not too far behind at Somerton it was decided to wait for them to catch up. In the meantime 3830 was taken off the train at Somerton whilst its train crossed the down XPT, so after waiting a further 25 minutes the Rs proceeded to Spencer Street via Albion.

The arrival at 21 10 instead of the scheduled 19 30 was considered a good effort considering the delays and problems encountered enroute. R711 then cut off the train and reversed whilst R761 remained, forming a push-pull mode back to the Steamrail Depot. In the meantime, 3801 arrived at platform 2 to a large welcoming crowd.

The now empty broad gauge train departed Spencer Street at 22 00 and arrived at the depot at Newport at 22 20. Both engines were examined by their respective servicing crews and were then put to rest after what was generally considered a most successful day.

All tours have operating problems and this one was no different. The one pleasing aspect of the day was that the most difficult of obstacles were overcome – the overnight train made it to Wodonga and the crew had sufficient rest time; the day morning train was early and the shunting was conducted with no problems.

It was unfortunate that one of the photo-stops was cancelled and that 3830 had broken down, however, Steamrail made their depot available to 3830's servicing crew and repairs were carried out that enabled the engine to carry out the programmed activity for the remainder of the tour.

To those at Freight Australia, Adrian Ponton, Craig Pitcher, Mark Ditterich and Henk Brink and staff from V/Line Passenger – thank you for your patience, understanding and co-operation in the planning and operation of the tour. To all at Steamrail Victoria Inc – a job well done.

R761-R711 beside 3801-3830 during the Euroa photo-stop. Fri.21.4 *Frank Cross*



THE *MILLENNIUM AURORA'S* VISIT TO VICTORIA

— *Following the twin 38's by car* —

The 4-6-2 38 class Pacific steam locomotives were the main line motive power of the New South Wales Government Railways, before falling victim to dieselisation like the Victorian Railways R class. 3801's first excursion to Victoria was in 1973 in conjunction with the Melbourne Easter Steam Festival, featuring 3801 and 3820.

Easter's visit was the first double headed standard gauge steam train to visit the regauged line to Portland and Dimboola.

R761 began the activities by departing Seymour for Wodonga on Thurs.20.4 at 21 15. This train was scheduled to rendezvous with the double 38's at Wodonga, which were due to arrive at Albury on the following day, Good Friday, at 10 30, then run parallel from Wodonga to Melbourne.

On the same morning, day trippers from Melbourne had an early start, with the promise of a return parallel run beside the double 38's. The loco power for this train was headed by West Coast Railway's oil burning R711, in front of Steamrail Victoria's diesel S313. R711-R761 later would double head the broad gauge component of the parallel run. Later that day, S313 worked back to Seymour hauling empty cars, shunting at Benalla, attaching and detaching locomotives and carriages, including some locos left behind by the SRHC on their annual Yarrawonga Easter pilgrimage.

My Good Friday activities began with R711-S313 crossing N470 on the 07 45(8312) up Albury pass. at Riggs Creek loop at 09 25. Whilst at church at Avenel I mentally noted that the 09 20 down Albury pass. was running about 10 minutes late. This was fortunate, as it meant not having to leave half way through the service! The other important aspect was that the down SRHC Yarrawonga special would be delayed by the same amount of time, as it had to wait line clear from Longwood block point.

T378-GM36-J515-T320 powered through Avenel at 11 53. This train was easily motorcaded to Longwood, where I then continued in search of a good position for the parallel run from Wodonga. As it was then close to the advertised departure time from its staging location of Wodonga loop (13 03), less options became available, eventually I selected the pedestrian overhead footbridge at the down end of Wangaratta station, along with about 50 to 80 other people.

The platform and the pedestrian bridge at the up end of the station possessed an even larger crowd. As it turned out the specials were running late which meant I could have selected another photo-stop location with a quicker get away. I noticed the local police were busy herding onlookers away from the running lines and eventually R761-R711 pounded along the 5' 3" about 1½ train lengths in front of 3801-3830 on the standard gauge before it disappeared through the concrete chasm behind the station.

*Over the Easter weekend, the
New South Wales Rail
Transport Museum toured
most of the standard gauge
network in Victoria, including
Portland and Dimboola*

Peter Foote

According to the circular, the two 38s were to take on water at Euroa. I began making mental calculations to avoid Euroa like the plague, as it was small and pokey and had a 60km/h speed limit with traffic lights. I bypassed Benalla and concluded that Violet Town standard gauge loop seemed a good option as the access road by-passes the outskirts of town, it

is before Euroa and allows a quick escape.

As it turned out, the two trains were almost in a perfect position and the sun briefly came out. Enroute, Glenrowan bank was considered until I saw a large number of cars parked near the side of the road, indicating a large crowd of people. From Euroa, the parallel running ended because of the late running and the following up Albury pass. which was being delayed, as well as the 38s having to take on water.

At Mangalore, the double R's thundered through in the fast fading sunlight. The 38s later arrived at Seymour loop and whatever chance photographers had of capturing a parallel run south of the Goulburn River evaporated in the descending darkness. Other standard gauge traffic put paid to fanciful thoughts, such as the up XPT, an up steel and down superfreighter, leaving the 38's and us to ponder what could have been. The final straw was that 3830 was having problems and was later failed and detached at Somerton loop.

The next day, the passengers from New South Wales went on the first of many side trips to Mildura via Castlemaine and Maryborough. The locomotive power was R761 leading R711-T378-GM36 and departure was scheduled for 10 10. The special was delayed from Seymour, then a few problems at Spencer Street occurred and as a result it lost path via Castlemaine and was rerouted through Ballarat. As well, the scheduled up special standard gauge train from Sydney, hauled by 4201-44211 was also running two hours late. Needless to say Saturday was not a good day.

An early start was required on Easter Mon.24.4, to be at Geelong by 08 35 which was when the up Mildura pass. was timetabled to arrive. Those on tour then travelled to the Bellarine Peninsula Tourist Railway or went on a bus tour along the scenic Great Ocean Road. The broad gauge train returned as empty cars from Geelong to Newport and detached some of the train at the Steamrail depot, then proceeded on to Seymour. The standard gauge train was being utilised by the ARHS Victorian Division on a day tour to Ararat. The up *Overland* powered though Gheringhap at 06 40 headed by BL27, and later under heavy cloud the special up Mildura pass. headed by R711-GM36-T378 raced through Gheringhap a little early at 07 45.

In the gloom, Gheringhap's annihilation seems to have been completed with nothing remaining except the all-important broad and standard gauge rails. The layout includes a standard and broad gauge crossing loop and a broad gauge gypsum siding, opposite the former station site.

MILLENNIUM AURORA OUT WEST

3801-3830 roll around the curve into Ararat from Maroona past the end of the disused broad gauge track from Ballarat. Anzac Day, Tues.25.4 *Peter Foote*



The assisting diesel motive power actually arrived in Melbourne three times during the tour. On Mon.24.4 4201-4421I have just arrived back at Spencer Street from Ararat with the day train *Ian Green*



'The Fly in the ointment'. G519 sits forlorn in the dirt at Dimboola on Wed.26.4 as 4421I and 4201 look on *Peter Foote*





4201 passes GNR27 at Stawell on Tues.25.4

The loneliness of Gheringhap this Easter Monday morning was gradually being replaced by the ever increasing procession of fellow motorcadgers. While waiting, a true international presence emerged. There were a pair of Japanese and Canadians along with local and interstate enthusiasts on the overhead road bridge waiting for the anticipated cross with 6PM6 at 09 25 but unfortunately it did not eventuate, probably due to the Easter break.

Under an overcast sky, 3801-3830 rolled to a stop momentarily but I did not record the time as I was in a mad rush to get in front of the train. The road to Murgheboluc on the main Hamilton Highway soon saw a huge increase in traffic as everyone attempted to get ahead of our quarry, the twin 38's, for that special photo. All the roads within the district converged into one at Inverleigh, with the Hamilton Highway producing a stream of motorcadgers that would have done justice to a gridlock in the city.

Five to six kilometres of cars patiently plodded at a constant speed, always keeping an equal distance from the pass., especially near Wingeel loop where the railway line is only metres from the road. As always, some foolhardy drivers overtook swag of cars in an attempt to grab that extra shot.

The level crossing at Cressy was definitely out as I was about 2 km from the action. This is the time when travelling on the train has its distinct advantages. This situation remained the same all the way to Berrybank loop some 17 km away.

At Berrybank, the cars started lining up like the MCG car park on Grand Final day with the slowing double 38s providing some sort of irresistible force, stopping just about all and sundry at the scheduled photo-stop location. This provided the opportunity to get in front of the pass. and search for another location. It became a case of follow the leader as the same cars were soon recognised, some stopped at Lismore or turned right at Derrinallum and headed for Vite Vite, Pura Pura or Mount Emu Creek bridge. However, the wait was worthwhile as 3830 lead the entourage with 44211-4201 bringing up the rear as they had changed positions at Berrybank. Then it was off again. One had to take off rather quickly and as there was no direct route to Maroona that locality was subsequently reached via Westmere, Miniera and Tatyoon.

Maroona, the junction for the line to Portland, possesses a crossing loop, grain silos and ballast loading area. A rake of ballast hoppers were present in the yard and whilst waiting for the plume of smoke that could be seen kilometres away over the plains, an up steel train headed by triple NR's passed through at 13 36 after crossing the 38s at Tatyoon loop. Shortly after, the tell tale signs of smoke moved ever so closer towards Maroona and the special stopped for about 9 minutes, departing at 14 13 (99 minutes late).

At Ararat, the points which were at the location of the collision on Fri.26.11.99 were still out of service, so any movements to and from Maryborough are carried out at the up end of the yard with any running around carried out at Pyrenees loop. This was supposed to be the case on this occasion, but after a protracted period of apparent inactivity, the special train reversed out of the platform towards Maroona, which left many motorcadgers flatfooted. Only later did I learn that, for possible safe working requirements, it shunted onto the Avoca line at the up end of points at Ararat station.

3830-3801 power away from Maroona on Mon.24.4. Both photos Greg Sweeney



The heritage diesels then led the train back to Maroona with the 38s trailing. At Maroona, progress was stopped immediately because of the passage of a down steel train headed by double NR's. This created a unique opportunity to record double NR's running through double 38s, even if the 38s were trailing. Given a bit of leeway by the cross at 16 25 (14 40), I motored east to try and obtain at least one shot of the diesels under power as they returned the day excursion train back to Melbourne. The assumption that the pass would scorch the ballast on their return journey proved well founded, as I just made it to the first crossing loop at Tatyoon.

Back at Maroona, the 38s were put to bed for the night. This differed from the circular's light engine movements. It was also time to service man and machine, readying for the chase the following day to Portland and Dimboola. During the night at Maroona, I lit a camp fire fed by some coal from the loading of the 38s. The only traffic noted were twin NRs and a DL on a down goods at 23 30, the down *Overland* at 00 45, and 44211-4201 arriving back 13 minutes early at 01 22.

The first steam crew arrived by taxi at 01 30 with the second crew not that far behind. Now it was time in the cool still night air to build up the boiler pressure in these locos. During this time the diesels were detached and shut down. The tender first locos steamed out of Maroona bound for Portland at 02 31 (26 minutes late).

Penalised by the low speed restrictions for tender first running, an abundant amount of listening stops all the way to Hamilton were carried out, particularly at the base of the 1 in 50 Strathkellar Bank after which the line drops into Hamilton. The anthem two steam giants produced this early Anzac Day morning spoke volumes for their fallen comrades in steam.

3801-3830 arrived at Portland Junction just on dawn and diverted down to the grain sidings, which differed from the schedule as arrival at Portland was supposed to be at the

freightgate siding area only. Quick!, which is the road to the loco area and grain sidings? Two EL's were at the loco area and I decided to check them out afterwards. Only later did I realise why the special went to the grain sidings – it was to run around as it was too long for the freightgate sidings. After running around in the now rising sun, the 38s headed off past the junction and then set back into the freightgate siding for much needed servicing. Watering the twin 31,000 litre water gins proved to be very time consuming.

Departure from Portland was noted at 08 56 (07 45) into more gorgeous sunlight. There was supposed to be a photo-stop between Heywood and Chrome loop but I am not sure if this occurred. However for the non-rail travellers, the usual circumstances prevailed; that is, the parade of motorcaders, people milling around the major level crossings and photo-lines at all the large intermediate stations, especially at Hamilton. Of interest I noticed that the pedestrian crossing at Hamilton had been removed.

Between Hamilton and Maroona another three photo-stops occurred when only two were indicated, forcing a 13 08 (11 30) arrival at Maroona. At Ararat, the train stalled approaching the last grade into Ararat station but a quick call to the crew on 4201, which was attached to the rear of the train (at Maroona), provided enough grunt to end that embarrassment.

The travellers on the train went to Halls Gap and enjoyed a late lunch while the 38s received a well-earned feed and drink. Going on previous experience, the single line Western Highway from Ararat to Stawell was clogged with returning Easter and Stawell Gift traffic. I headed straight for Stawell noting that chasing the 38s would have been a problem. This is where the GNR GM's were supposed to be stabled on a ballast train. One was not disappointed as GNR27-GNR22 stood silently in the afternoon sun. Of course the trickle of fellow motorcaders increased dramatically as the 38's came closer.

Another view of the day train enjoying a fast trip back to Melbourne with 4201-44211 at Tatyoon Loop in the late afternoon sunlight. Mon.24.4 Peter Foote





3

TWIN 38's POWER AROUND VICTORIA

- 1 Wherever the train stopped it attracted large crowds and H
- 2 A peaceful Anzac Day morning at Portland is disturbed by th
- 3 Streamlined or non-streamlined, light or dark green, which is
Tues.25.4 *Frank Cross*
- 4 Crew members having a chat at Maroona. A huge team of p
they fixed them. Tues.25.4 *Frank Cross*
- 5 Deep in Ned Kelly country – the two Pacifics perform at a pl





4

was no exception. Tues.25.4 *Peter Foote*
 sts of 3801-3830 as they head for Dimboola. Tues.25.4 *Peter Foote*
 choice of loco? Both crews enjoy the sun at Pyrenees Loop.

re involved with the running of the whole tour and as problems arose –

at Glenrowan Loop as they head home. Thurs.27.4 *Peter Foote*



5

While waiting, the down steel ran through in the ever-increasing lengthening shadows. Again the steam special stopped allowing the local passengers from Ararat to disembark and the people from Stawell to travel to Murtoa. This type of local passenger working occurred all the way from Portland to Dimboola with co-ordinated buses to take them back to their hometown.

By the time 3801-3830 reached Murtoa, it was dark and another set down/pickup of passengers occurred. The local passenger shuttle pattern was repeated at Horsham. The Dukes Highway west of Horsham produced a totally unexpected line of motorcaders and the amount of rail lights illuminated an almost continual curtain of red to Dimboola.

At Pimpinio loop the steam special crossed NR91/NR88 on an up goods and finally arrived at Dimboola at 19 35 (18 30). I did not see much train activity during the night but I vaguely recalled the pass. returning behind the diesels from Leoor loop at 05 15. Prior to that I did observe CLF2/CLP17 on an up Patricks superfreighter.

In the early morning light in Dimboola yard, during the course of normal duties, at 06 27, the rear bogie of G519 left the rails on a critical set of points and ran into the dirt while approaching to attach to a down Nhill grain train. I did not fully comprehend the significance of this incident until much later when in daylight it could be seen that the 38s were trapped in the yard on the turntable lead track. A train controller's nightmare, and Aus Steam all over again! A break-down crew were summoned from Bendigo and the rerailing was expected to be completed by 11 15 - 11 30.

With this news, it was time to see where the GNR locos were and I found they were waiting line clear at Pimpinio loop and were wondering what was going on. Eventually they were given the road and the pass. was shunted from the platform track onto the Yaapect branch line. The pass. was stabled in

the grain sidings overnight. Also noted was NR79 on an up steel train at 09 35.

Not satisfied with the GNR locos on film I searched for the possibility of seeing the twin EL's, first seen at Portland on grain trains, at Murtoa. Not to be. Also I missed 4201-44211 taking the pass. back to Melbourne. I found out that the interstate visitors were booked to travel on a tram tour in Melbourne later that evening.

Dimboola informed me that the diesels departed at 10 22, about the time I was at Horsham. Arrgh! Upon arrival at Dimboola, the 38s were receiving water, with RT18 shunting its consist of two water gins and van ready for its departure back to Melbourne. 3801-3830 departed at 12 32 (06 35). I quickly gave up the chase of the locos and went further west searching for the GNR locos and the *Ghan*. Both were found successfully.

The next time I saw the two interstate visitors was at Broadford loop on Thurs.26.4. Again, the special was running late and it was overtaken by 8170 at 11 53 (10 50) instead of at Seymour. Apparently the local police at Broadford asked the people present on the overhead bridge at the down end of the station to move on as they were causing a traffic hazard.

At Seymour, just short of the platform, the steam locomotives took water direct from the fire station pressurised by their pumps. Needless to say of course I then followed them by car all the way to Albury seeing them at several locations, including Mangalore Road at Seymour and Glenrowan loop. At Glenrowan loop NR1-NR62 on the up steel waited for the cross. An impromptu photo-stop then occurred while the steam special waited for the up Bandiana superfreighter hauled by G520. The up XPT was crossed at Chiltern loop but I chose to ignore that location, electing for the Murray River Bridge at Albury, where in the fading light the *Millennium Aurora's* foray into Victoria ended.

3801-3830 thunder over the flyover at Springhurst on Thurs.27.4 Peter Foote



Where broad gauge steam
locos once took water,
3801-3830 race through
Branhholme as they head
for Ararat. Anzac Day
Tues.25.4



3801-3830 easily lift their
train out of Seymour Loop
as they head home to
Sydney on Thurs.27.4



Back in NSW but still a long
way from home, 3801-3830
cross the Murray River in
fading light on Thurs.27.4

All photos Peter Foote



New South Wales Rail Transport Museum

TRIP TO MILDURA

The weekend required a considerable amount of organisational effort from Victoria's rail operators. The Seymour Railway Heritage Centre (SRHC) provided many of the carriages with others from Steamrail and V/Line Passenger. SRHC, West Coast Railway (WCR) and Steamrail locomotives were used and crews from WCR, V/Line Passenger and Freight Australia (F/A) were involved.

The role of accredited operator was fulfilled by WCR who completed a substantial portion of the organisational as well as providing train conductors, both tasks requiring my involvement.

As accredited operator, WCR had to make dozens of phone calls to SRHC's Terry Hughes and F/A's Mark Ditterich in order to develop schedules and finalise the subsequent operational and crewing requirements.

The train was scheduled to run Melbourne - Castlemaine - Maryborough - Mildura - Ballarat - Geelong and then empty cars Newport - Seymour.

With the groundwork completed and plans in place, Sat.22.4 saw SRHC's GM36-T378 bring our enormous train into Spencer Street platform 3 to be joined by R761-R711, both coming light engine from Newport after their efforts on the North East special and parallel run the day before. The diesels collected WAL951, also off the North East special and placed it to be shunted onto the end of the train.

Concern about fuel level in the powervan, PCJ491, forced the decision to remove and re-fuel it as it would need to run continuously over the weekend. This took some time, as did returning it to the train, attaching WAL951 then the four locomotives. Final consist was R761-R711-T378-GM36-WAL951-PCJ491-LAN2354-Avoca-Victoria-Indi-Werribee-3ABS-Ovens-Carey-Acheron-Wando-Pekina-Loddon-Yarra. With 15 carriages the train examination also took some time and the scheduled departure time of 10 10 was pushed back considerably.

Pathing problems on the Bendigo line meant that there would be a scheduled run through at Kyneton by the 12 10 down Bendigo pass. in order to allow a photo-stop to be conducted at Taradale. Unfortunately we were advised that a path would not be available until after the 12 10 and as this would make the day extremely late, train control offered a path to Maryborough via Ballarat which was accepted and the passenger arrangements altered accordingly.

Finally, with a new train number, 8199, and new plans in place, we departed at 11 42 (92 late) commencing our near-1000 km journey. After a cross with a pair of sprinters at Rockbank (12 17-37), we had an uninterrupted run to Ballarat. With four locomotives, 15 vehicles for 764 t and over 300 metres in length, the multicoloured train tackled the western line in style.

Easter 2000 was something of an epic for steam in Victoria, highlighted by the presence of NSW steam engines 3801 and 3830. The action was not confined to the standard gauge as part of the package took passengers to Mildura behind Victorian based motive power over the Saturday, Sunday and Monday of the Easter weekend

Craig Haber

The railfan grapevine must have been working well – although many would-be photographers must have endured a frustrating wait on the Bendigo line, many others found us making spectacular progress westwards. A speed restriction at the down end of Bacchus Marsh station (12 54) ensured a spectacular climb up Ingliston Bank with North British and EMD's finest digging in their heels and storming through Bank Box Loop at 13 09 and Ballan at 13 22.

Reaching Ballarat at 13 52, we arrived into platform 2, where the passengers were detrained to visit the Central Goldfields Railway at Maldon.

R761 cut off and went to the Ballarat East Loco for turning and servicing, after which the rest of the train pulled forward through Lydiard Street to be in the clear prior to setting back into the yard proper.

With Maryborough not due to open until 18 00, there was time to kill, with most of the train staff heading for the 'refresh' on platform 1. R761's VIP crew had no such luck, they departed light engine for Melbourne at 15 34.

Departing Ballarat with another new train number (8197) at 16 56, the handful of staff left on board took advantage of the trailing Yarra car, taking in the undulations of the line whilst the sun was setting, with the clear dusk sky interrupted only by a trail of smoke from the hard working locomotives. Even this far back, the roar of R711 and the GMs could be heard for much of the journey, passing Sulky Loop at 17 08, Creswick 17 18, Tourello Loop 17 30, Clunes 17 36 and Talbot at 17 52, reaching Maryborough in darkness at 18 09. Passengers re-joined the train while the R was oiled and watered. Having had enough for one day I handed over to my colleague for the remainder of the journey and signed off.

After the day's early problems, things had now recovered and under the control of a F/A crew we departed Maryborough 81 minutes early for the trip to Mildura. While I enjoyed the opportunity for some 'shut eye' in the LAN car, my colleague worked through the night, noting locations Dunolly at 19 14, Emu Loop 20 19, St Arnaud 20 39, Sutherland Loop 20 48 and a water stop at Donald from 21 15 - 22 02, still ahead of time.

Further water was taken at Woomelang (23 27 - 00 15) and Ouyen (02 00 - 02 45) before rolling into Mildura at the unsociable hour of 04 25. Having not previously visited Yelta, I was keen to be awake on arrival, but had second thoughts considering it was freezing cold and ridiculously early. Not surprisingly, there were no locals out and only F/A staff to meet our arrival when the locos were cut off and stabled whilst V/Line orange and grey G521 was attached by a local crew. After checking that the length would not exceed Yelta's runaround, we proceeded onto Yelta in darkness, arriving there with the first hint of Sunraysia sunshine at 06 00.



There is still a chill in the air as G521 returns the tour train from Yelta to Mildura on Sun.23.4 Both photos Craig Haber

Exploring the facilities did not take long as the crew pointed out. 'Wait until the sun comes up, then you will see how much there ISN'T here!' Indeed so, just a runaround loop and dead-end extension serving a silo surrounded by nothing but Mallee scrub.

Few passengers ventured from the train, most enjoying breakfast while the sun rose prior to departure at 07 15. Two photo-stops were held on the run back to Mildura, again with few participants – those braving the early morning conditions were rewarded with the famous Mallee sun highlighting our most unusual working.

Arriving back in Mildura at 08 00, the passengers left to enjoy their day whilst the train was divided and stabled in the car sheds, 15 cars being a neat fit. Meanwhile the SRHC crew serviced the locos whilst they were stabled.

The layover time was a good opportunity to sleep and thus I was ready for duty again in time for the mid-afternoon departure. After whistling out at 15 38, with our F/A crew at the controls, we made good progress through the countryside, pausing for photo-stops at Nowingie (km post 563), Hattah station and again at km post 540, reaching Ouyen 6 late at 17 41. X32-S301 and S310 were shut down in the yard while R711 quenched its thirst, surrounded by inquisitive locals braving the freezing conditions. Donald yard was full of containers, indicating healthy traffic for Freight Australia.

Continuing south, Maryborough was reached 37 early at 23 58 where I again signed off and handed my duties over to my workmate.

A long break was scheduled here and the platform was largely deserted with most of the passengers asleep and just the crews and a couple of curios locals awake. Crews then changed over, a V/Line Passenger driver and WCR fireman taking over for the final leg.

I was well asleep in the LAN by departure at 04 43 and times noted by my colleague included Talbot 05 00, Tourello Loop 05 25, Sulky Loop 05 46 and Ballarat from 05 58 - 06 20. The climb of Warrenheip bank, must have been spectacular, although few were awake to enjoy it prior to the downhill run to Gheringhap, passing Lal Lal at 06 41, Lethbridge 07 16 and Gheringhap at 07 41.

After creeping through North Geelong Yard, we reached Geelong's platform 3 at 08 16, 19 early. The RTM passengers bid the broad gauge farewell – their day was to be spent on the Great Ocean Road and they later re-joined their standard gauge train at North Shore.

The locos headed for Geelong Loco, watering and turning the R which then led the empty cars to Newport, leaving the diesels to haul the SRHC stock back to their Seymour depot, concluding a successful weekend.

R711 sits off the turntable at Mildura while GM36 and G521 discuss whatever diesels discuss. Sun.23.4



OPERATIONS

An overview of recent sightings and observations

XPT TERMINATED SHORT

On Thurs.13.4, the south bound overnight XPT service to Melbourne was terminated at Albury. Consequently, the north bound daylight XPT service originated from Albury and Victorian passengers for the north bound service travelled to Albury by road coach. Three road coaches departed from the inner roadway at Spencer Street – the first two ran express between Melbourne and Albury, whilst the third stopped to pick-up at Benalla and Wangaratta.

NEW SUBURBAN TIMETABLE

Both suburban rail operators introduced new timetables on Sun. 9.4. These timetables incorporated the following additional services:

BAYSIDE TRAINS

Weekdays

18 40 Down Pakenham
18 52 Down Dandenong
19 46 Down Dandenong
20 35 Pakenham - Dandenong
04 47 Dandenong - Cranbourne
05 06 Cranbourne - Dandenong
19 10 Down Cranbourne
20 03 Cranbourne - Dandenong
05 27 Down Sandringham

Saturdays

00 56 Dandenong - Cranbourne

Sundays

10 41 Down Pakenham
19 01 Up Pakenham
19 04 Down Pakenham
09 01 Dandenong - Cranbourne
09 31 Dandenong - Cranbourne
09 32 Cranbourne - Dandenong
20 41 Dandenong - Cranbourne
18 31 Up Frankston
19 17 Down Frankston
07 52 Down St.Albans
23 17 Up Upfield

HILLSIDE TRAINS

Weekdays

05 05 Ringwood - Belgrave
05 11 Belgrave - Ringwood
18 33 Up Lilydale
06 03 Up Alamein
18 40 Up Greensborough
17 51 Up Epping
18 45 Down Epping

Saturdays

20 minute service from Belgrave and Lilydale starts 3 hours earlier at 07 00.
18 39 Down Glen Waverley
19 10 Up Glen Waverley
19 11 Up Epping

Sundays

09 51 Up Epping
10 18 Down Epping
18 58 Down Epping

Public timetable books for the new services were available on Mon.3.4.

V/LINE PASSENGER – EASTER SERVICES

V/Line Passenger operated the following timetable during the Easter holiday period, which this year included Anzac Day:

Fri.21.4 Normal Sunday timetable
Sat.22.4 Normal Saturday timetable
Sun.23.4 Normal Sunday timetable
Mon.24.4 Normal Saturday timetable
Tues.25.4 Normal Saturday service, plus additional train and coach services.

WESTERN STANDARD GAUGE

MILLENNIUM AURORA

The *Millennium Aurora* tour operated by the NSWRTM resulted in a number of interesting workings on the Western Standard Gauge.

At 09 28 on Easter Monday, 24.4, the special headed west through Gheringhap led by New South Wales steam locomotives, 3801 and 3830 hauling eight vehicles with NSW diesel locomotives 44211 and 4201 at the rear. The latter two formed the motive power for a return movement that passed the same location at 18 33 with a train of only five carriages. The 38's and the remaining three vehicles were on an overnight trip to Portland. 44211 and 4201 passed Gheringhap again, for the third time that day, at 23 33 with a train of 14 vehicles returning west.

On Tues.25.4, the 38's returned to Maroona, the junction of the Portland line and the main Melbourne to Adelaide line, where the two trains combined for the run to Dimboola. Upon arrival at this location, the steam locomotives were cut off the

train, and the diesels took over to take the train out to Leeor Loop, close to the South Australian border, before returning to Dimboola to stable for the night. After this train departed Dimboola, the 38's were serviced and stabled in the turntable road for the night.

The next morning, Wed.26.4, before the steam locomotives were retrieved and put back on their train for the return to Melbourne, Freight Australia's G519 derailed on the points leading to the turntable, trapping them at the loco depot.

By 10 00 it was decided that the special would depart for Melbourne behind the diesel locomotives and the steam locos would follow later in the day once the G class had been re-railed. This occurred at 11 15, and 3801 and 3830 were seen heading non-stop through Horsham at 13 01, hauling two water gins and a van. They were later seen passing Gheringhap at 18 42.

GNR GM'S

April saw the use of Great Northern Rail's GM's, 22 and 27 operating ballast trains from Bung Bong near Avoca on the Ararat to Maryborough line, to destinations between Ararat and Kaniva on the Melbourne to Adelaide line.

They were transferred from Melbourne on Patrick's MA3/9755 Adelaide bound service behind ASR's CLP17 and CLF1, which passed through Gheringhap at 23 01 on Tues.4.4. They were seen the next day at Dimboola, from where they departed at 11 05, light engine, for a trip to an unknown destination further West. By 16 00 they had returned and stabled, still light engine. This trip was to allow GNR's drivers to 'learn the road'.

After that date they operated ballast trains, firstly to locations in the Stawell area and by Thurs.13.4 made it to Horsham where they were seen discharging ballast at 10 00. By the end of April they had made it to Kaniva Loop, being sighted on Sat.29.4 at 13 15.

The last sighting on this service was on Thurs.4.5, and on the evening of Sun.7.5 they arrived in Adelaide as part of a sextet of locomotives on

OPERATIONS



G534-X49-S306 power through Navigator with 9123 North Geelong Yard - Maryborough empty grain train on Sat.26.2 *Julian Insall*

Patricks' 1MA3 as CLP17-GM43-GM34-CLF7-GM27-GM22. None of the GM's were reported as part of the consist leaving Melbourne, so the latter two would have been collected somewhere around Ararat, and the middle two added at Taillem Bend for the trip over the Adelaide hills.

A unique aspect of these ballast services was that they are the only service to regularly operate through Dimboola non-stop. All other trains usually stop at this location to change drivers.

CTC FAILURE CAUSES DELAYS

A CTC failure in South Australia, between Taillem Bend and Wolseley, caused some delays for trains on the Victorian part of the interstate line on Fri.7.4.

The *Overland*, hauled by BL33, was three hours late, the up Toll train, AM4/9754, hauled by G531-G538 was four hours late and National Rail's AB6, NR84-NR43, was also three hours late.

TRAILERAIL FIRE

Fri.21.4, Good Friday, saw a big Trilerail service from Melbourne to Perth, MP7, which was operating a day early due to the Easter break, hauled by two NR's 85 and 84 with 45 trailers. Unfortunately, near Glenorchy, just west of Stawell, one trailer caught fire, with the end result being three trailers totally burnt out and a blockage of the line for around

14 hours. Road cranes were brought in to lift the remains off the line to clear it. (GE/NF)

EL'S AND LATE G'S ON THE YAAPEET BRANCH

On a part of the Victorian rail system that has been the almost exclusive domain of the G class for over a decade now, some welcome variety was spotted on the Mon.1.5 when EL54-EL57 led a grain train to and from Jeparit. This was the first reported sighting of a non-G class hauled train on this line for over two years.

As is the usual operating pattern on this line, the train departed Dimboola early in the morning, and was loaded just after midday, the return to Dimboola being at about 13 00.

The arrival time for the loaded train is later if the train ventures further up the branch, although it is usually stabled by 15 00 to 16 00.

Wed.26.4 also saw the unusual occurrence of an early evening loaded G538-9x grain wagons train on the branch when G538 was seen approaching Dimboola at 17 45. This train was running late due to the derailment of G519 in the Dimboola yard earlier in the day, which delayed the departure of the branch grain train, causing the late return.

Since standardisation in 1995, the G class has led most trains on this line, with the exceptions being one X hauled train and around six H class hauled trains just after the re-opening. Prior to this, the G was the mainstay of motive power on these trains. (EP/NF)

UNUSUAL TEST TRAIN

During the early hours of Tues.18.4 a rail corrugation test train passed through Gheringhap powered by GM42 (ASR) and J103 (Great Northern) hauling what looked like three crew cars and a flat wagon. The same train returned at 04 43 on Wed.19.4 with the same consist minus the J class, as train number 41103. (GE)

EL54-EL57 at Hopetoun grain silo loop during their first visit on the branch line on Tues.2.5. They made a second visit on Fri.12.5 *Tim Burke*



OPERATIONS

PORTLAND PILOT CHANGE OVER

The pilot loco from Portland was changed over when on Tues.2.5, when Y169 accompanied G530 on the down Dimboola goods, 9791, and the following day Y152 was behind the same G class on the return working, 9792, on both occasions being sighted at Gheringhap. The Y class locomotive is either collected or detached at Maroona to be forwarded to Portland and does not usually make it as far as Dimboola. (GE)

WESTERN BROAD GAUGE

Freight Australia's shortage of motive power has led to some interesting locomotive combinations. A Y class was even sighted on a grain train on Sun.30.4 when at 09 35, G527-Y122 were seen heading an unidentified loaded grain through Gheringhap and just over seven hours later G526-H4-Y122 led down empty grain, 9123, through at 16 46. Also that day, empty grain number 9121 was led by the combination of G514-S307-H5-X42.

The T class is also making a comeback with T374, T379 and T400 all seen on grain trains on this line during the week ending Sat.6.5.

BALLARAT EAST MOVEMENTS

On Fri.31.3, R711 and three cars, BK700, BK714 and WAL 951 came in for preparations for the Easter series of tours. The R required replacement



'An S class tender is on the move'. Heavy rain near Pykes Creek Reservoir does not slow the transportation of the tender from Bairnsdale to the West Coast Railway depot at Ballarat East. The tank will be restored onto an underframe and suitable bogies. It could be used as a water gin on steam tours. Fri.14.4 Robert Carlisle

of a five-inch flue tube. BK711 had arrived four days earlier on Mon.27.3 to have some torn roof canvas repaired.

Fri.7.4 saw R711, B76 and BK 700 released before being transferred directly to Melbourne, whilst S302 come in for routine servicing.

The S was released on Fri.14.4 along with WAL 951, while Sun.16.4 saw S311 and R711 both in for servicing. On Wed.19.4, S311 left and B61 came in. On Thurs.20.4, R711, B61 and the two cars, BK 711 and BK 714 were all released.

Freight Australia locomotives in and out of Ballarat East for painting into their new green colours included H1 out on Fri.7.4 and P20 in on Thurs.13.4.

A tender from an old S class steam locomotive was delivered to Ballarat East, by road, on Fri.14.4, after spending several decades as a fuel storage tank at Bairnsdale. It is to be repaired and used as a high capacity water gin for WCR steam tours.

GENERAL BALLARAT NEWS

The Whites pilot out on the remains of the Redan line has not run since Wed.5.1. Since that time, Whites has been serviced by road transport. Is this a temporary measure brought about by a grain wagon shortage, or is it a sign of the line being 'closed'?

COWANGIE GYPSUM TRAINS 9137/9138

Train number 9137 operates from North Geelong yard to Cowangie and is usually a sizable train, but on Wed.12.4 it arrived at Ballarat with just nine vehicles behind X39-X33. The rear four wagons were log traffic terminating at Ballarat and two oil tankers and two louvre vans were also detached for on-forwarding on train number 9141 Mildura goods later in the evening. 9137 then departed with the two X class towing the remaining single empty gypsum wagon.

Below are some examples of the variety of motive power that can be

'Rainbow centenary train' at Rainbow, having arrived from Dimboola on Sun.31.10.99, much to the enjoyment of the local people. G520 leads a flat wagon with a generator to supply power to the cars Tim Burke



OPERATIONS



'FREIGHT Oz' IN NSW

: Above: Freight Australia are now working in New South Wales on a daily basis.
: T399-T408 are stabled at Port Kembla in between trips. Sat.29.4 *Peter Gambling*
: Below: Departing Goulburn for Port Kembla, X45 leads a G and three T class
: locos on Thurs.20.4 *Damien Butler*



OPERATIONS



'Quad power' on the north-east. NR7-NR64-DL45-NR35 strain with an up steel train just south of Glenrowan. Tues.25.4 *Les Nichol*

seen on these services, with times at Gheringhap.

9137 Tues.11.4 G532-S306-P20 at 16 40

9137 Thurs.20.4 X32-S310-S301-X47 at 14 23

9138 Thurs.13.4 X32-S306 at 05 55

9138 Fri.14.4 X33-X39-H5 at 06 54

NORTH

DENILQUIN GOODS 9083/9084

As reported last month, the Denilquin to Melbourne goods, 9084, had been temporarily re-routed via Toolamba, because of works on the Sydenham to Bendigo line. This came to an end on Mon.17.4 when 9084 returned to the Bendigo line behind G523-H1-X39. This unusual combination was matched two days later on Wed.19.4 when it was G512-X33-T371 hauling the train.

On Sun.29.4, 9084 was again diverted via Toolamba, operating as 9302 and led by G523- X39, but only made it as far as Tongala before it collided with a truck, resulting in the G landing on its side beside the track and the X damaged but still up-right. The line blockage caused subsequent services to be returned to the Bendigo route.

SWAN HILL GOODS 9080/9280

Last month the return train from Swan Hill was referred to incorrectly as 9028; it is 9280. This train usually boasts a single G upon departure for Melbourne from Bendigo, although there have been some exceptions reported. G526-T409 departed at 20 50 on Thurs.13.4, G511-H5-T379 were seen on Mon.17.4 and S306 teamed up with G521 on Tues.18.4 and with G526 on Wed.19.4. The G-S-T combination of G516- S306-T374 departed Bendigo on this service on Wed.26.4.

EASTER STEAM SPECIAL

R761 led the annual steam special from Melbourne to the Bendigo Fair on Easter Monday. Arrival was at 11 30 with the combination R761-BE-BE-BW-BW-ABE-BW-BE-BCE as train 8097. The train departed at 17 02.

SUBURBAN CAR TRANSFER

Suburban train sets are still being sent to North Bendigo Workshops periodically for maintenance, with GNR's former T class 377 hauling such a transfer on Sun.16.4, arriving at 15 50 as train number 9011. It later departed for the return to Melbourne at 17 17 as a light engine movement number 0012. (GW)

BOORT GOODS 9077/9078

Smaller classes of locomotives continue to haul these services, along with a number of rare double headers. The combinations of H5-Y157, T374-Y157 and H4-Y157 were in charge on Thurs.6.4, Wed.26.4 and Sat.29.4 respectively.

In a majority of instances, this train operates from Bendigo to Boort and return on the same day, although there are exceptions. On Fri.31.3, Y157 operated to the latter location and stabled until the following Monday when A85 ran to Boort, and the two combined to lead the return movement. Again on Sat.29.4 when H4-Y157 ran, they did not return on the same day, but waited until the next Monday. (GW)

NORTH EAST BROAD GAUGE

TOCUMWAL GOODS 9351/9352 AND 9353/9354

The earlier of the two Tocumwal to Melbourne freights, 9352, was hauled by an A-X combination on a number of occasions during March and April. A77-X50 were sighted on Tues.28.3, while A71-X48 were seen on consecutive days, Thurs.13.4 and Fri.14.4. The later train, 9354, was sighted on Tues.28.3 with A85 leading two unidentified P's. (CC)

WORKS

A round-up of News items

JOLIMONT FOOTBRIDGE WORKS

On Tues.18.4 the up end footbridge at Jolimont station was temporarily closed and the new down end footbridge (opposite Powlett Street) was opened to the public and work commenced on upgrading the surface of the up end as soon as it was closed.

HEIDELBERG COMPUTER BASED INTERLOCKING COMMISSIONED

On Mon.3.4 the following signalling alterations were commissioned at Heidelberg:

- The mechanical interlocking frame was abolished.
- A new computer based interlocking control panel was commissioned in the station office.
- All signals between Eaglemont and Rosanna were replaced with LED type signals.
- The fringe signal box equipment was relocated from Heidelberg to

Greensborough and the JZA system was extended with associated modification to displays at Metrol and to the PRIDE system.

A down train cannot depart from No. 1 track at Heidelberg under the new arrangements. Consequently, up trains that terminate at Heidelberg must be signalled into No. 2 track.

MORE WORK ON THE ELTHAM TRESTLE

The following work was undertaken on the Diamond Creek trestle bridge at Eltham in April:

- The up and down side outer timber beams between piers 12 and 13 were replaced by a steel beams.
- Three new, all steel escapes were constructed on the western side of the bridge.

ELTHAM SUBWAY PAINTED

On Tues.18.4 work started on painting the concrete walls of the subway at Eltham station in a light wheat colour.

The task was completed by the next day.

Presumably the subway has been painted to lighten the atmosphere and make it more inviting, as there was no graffiti problem (primarily due security cameras and the subway being well lit)

DOCKLANDS FOOTBRIDGE LIFTS

The assembly and fitting out of the lifts linking the platforms at Spencer Street station with the Docklands footbridge was completed at the end of April.

MAJOR DOCKLANDS ROAD OPENS

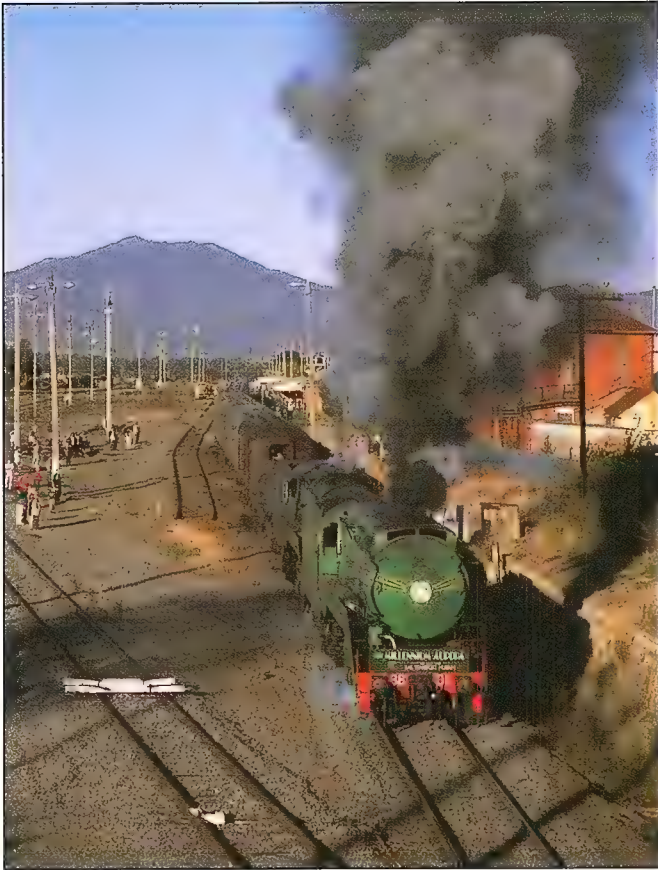
The Bourke Street Extension to Dudley Street section of the Stadium Circuit (formerly known as the North - South Road) in the Docklands area was open to road traffic on Thurs.20.4.

This new road passes through the site of Melbourne Yard and it was necessary to demolish a large section of the brick abutments that originally supported the rail lines across Dudley Street to accommodate the intersection between this road and Dudley Street.

Rail track ballast cleaning machine stops at Berrybank loop to cross two steel trains and the 38-hauled special.
Mon.24.4 Robert Carlisle



THE 38's WESTERN ENDEAVOUR



- : Above: A smoky departure out of Ararat as 3801-3830 head west to Dimboola on Tues.25.4
- : Above right: The sun reflects off the train nicely as the Pacifics tackle the grade up to Pyrenees Loop.Tues.25.4 *Both photos Frank Cross*
- : Below: Due to the derailment of G519 in Dimboola yard blocking the steam locos over the pit, they were left behind until rerailing took place. Back on the main line again, 3801 and 3830 head their interesting train through Wail on Wed.26.4 *Peter Foote*



PRESERVATION

News from the preservation scene

RAILWAY HERITAGE PLAN

The Department of Infrastructure (DOI) called tenders for the preparation of a management plan for railway rollingstock and related heritage which closed Wed.17.5.

The scope of the project is to consider the future of the government owned railway rollingstock and related railway heritage issues and also those pertaining to assets in the custody or ownership of rail heritage groups so the government can decide the future of railway heritage.

Some of the areas for consideration to include

Non-commercial railway rollingstock:

- The 'Heritage Railway Rollingstock Database-1988', which is a listing of railway rollingstock held by railway interest groups and excludes vehicles allocated to commercial operators, is to be audited for completeness.
- Investigations to be undertaken to identify significant railway locomotives, carriages and wagons in both Government and private ownership.
- Consideration to be given for the retention, rationalisation, conservation, restoration for both static and running, storage and operational vehicles to be earmarked for future preservation.

To be included is the future requirements of existing mainline operating railway interest groups and the tourist railway groups and the role they play in the local regional activities.

Railway Related Heritage:

An evaluation is to be carried out on 'The Railway Heritage Centre of Victoria (Newport Workshops) Proposal-12.99 to evaluate the feasibility of a railway museum option for the Newport site.

To report on the Metropolitan and Country mainline railway system, closed-line tourist railways and non-used railway lines including Railway stations, goods sheds and other buildings, structures including signals, water towers and other material of heritage value. This is to include an evaluation of the resources of railway interest groups and the allocation of assets based on their needs and

capacities, including their connections to business and the local communities.

The brief is to include documenting the collection of railway material held by the Victorian museum and other groups, report on the Government holdings of memorabilia, plans and drawings, patterns, spare parts and surplus workshop machinery.

The future of the Newport Railway Workshops is to be considered as a potential railway museum and as a resource for railway restoration, or alternative or complementary locations for these purposes.

The time frame is for the project to commence on 1.6 and to be completed 1.9.

TRAM HERITAGE PLAN

Tenders recently called by the Office of the Director of Public Transport for the preparation of a management plan for tram and tram related heritage has been let with the successful tenderer being Booz Allen and Hamilton, consultants with strategic planning emphasis and Boyce Pizzey and Russell McGee specialists in cultural aspects.

The scope of the study is to consider the future of the surplus Government trams and related tram heritage issues.

Currently there are in excess of 180 stored trams in East Block, Newport Railway Workshops. The trams are predominately W5, W6 and W7 class, including 15 artist painted trams of the later series. These include the work of Michael Leunig and Clifton Pugh.

The Hawthorn Tram Depot redevelopment project incorporates the retention of Tram Shed No.1 as a depot to house the heritage tram fleet. The depot will house 20 trams as a storage facility but not as a museum facility. The core of the heritage fleet is currently housed at Preston Tramway Workshops.

The ready reserve tram fleet comprises some fifty W6 and W7 trams currently stored at Preston, which are to act as a backup to the operational tram fleet. As these trams are not fitted with the automatic ticketing system and have not been converted to one-person operation, including necessary safety features, they are no longer required in the reserve role. Seven trams are with the tram companies and are used for driver training, reserve and charter use.

Tram related heritage includes the need for a permanent museum and workshop. The Hawthorn Tram Depot does not have the capacity for servicing so consideration has to be given for both servicing and restoration. One such location may be Preston Workshops.

Malvern Tramway Museum has a collection of memorabilia with no capacity to exhibit larger items including trams with accessibility being a major problem. Existing tram museums such as TMSV, Ballarat, Bendigo and the association at Haddon may have a part to play.

The study is to consider other assets such as buildings, tram poles, shelters, depots, substations etc. The demand by metropolitan and regional groups who may be interested in street tramways, the current and future heritage considerations.

INTERSTATE RAILWAY MUSEUMS

Apart from the proposed management plan to be drawn up in Victoria for rail rollingstock, museum and heritage issues activities are occurring in two other states with respect to rail museums.

The Queensland State Government and Heritage Rails Network propose to jointly fund \$20 million for the development of the main workshops at the Ipswich rail yards, by 2002, as an international standard interactive rail museum. Queensland Rail is calling for expression of interest to deliver the vision for the Workshops, from conceptual development, detailed documentation and implementation of the proposal.

The NSW State Government has announced that it will call tenders for the restoration and staged redevelopment of the dormant Eveleigh Carriage Workshops to create a transport heritage park together with residential, recreational and commercial facilities on the site west of Redfern station.

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TAILDISC

Reviews, amendments, queries, bits and pieces and the odd spot

ODD SPOT

The cost of repairing vandalism at Blacktown, Emu Plains, Parramatta, Penrith and Richmond stations in Sydney was cut by 75% during a six week trial in 1999 of playing classical music at these railway stations.

Vandalism at two of the five stations was actually eliminated.

Following the success of the trial, the NSW Government is considering the option of playing classical music on trains, as well as at stations, to cut the \$10 to \$15 million annual damage bill created by vandalism and graffiti.

Where is it?

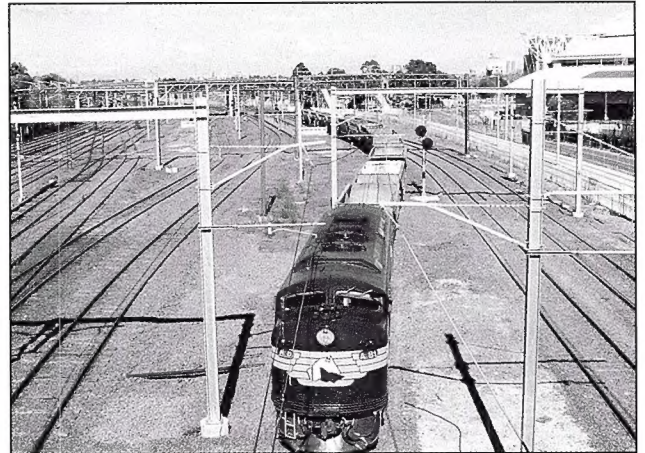
Last month's answer. While most wheat trains normally have large motive power on the point, P21 is quite happy making up its train at Dookie as Jeff Bounds looked on.

This month's question: Gavin McLaughlan caught G529-T369 roaring along the main line on an empty grain train on Tues. 17.10.89. Whilst this location once saw heavy activity, grain trains were not all that common. Where is it?

CORRECTION

On page 155 of the May issue two photo captions were inadvertently duplicated during film imposition. The photos are reproduced below along with the correct captions. We apologise to all concerned.

A81 passes under the MCG/Tennis Centre pedestrian bridge with an up empty mini Apex goods on Mon.3.4



Another view from the Latrobe Street bridge with a sprinkle of N class locos in the country platforms. The Docklands footbridge is in the background. Sat. 25.3

Both photos Peter Foote



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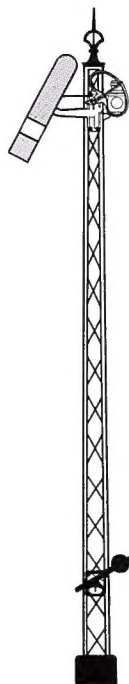
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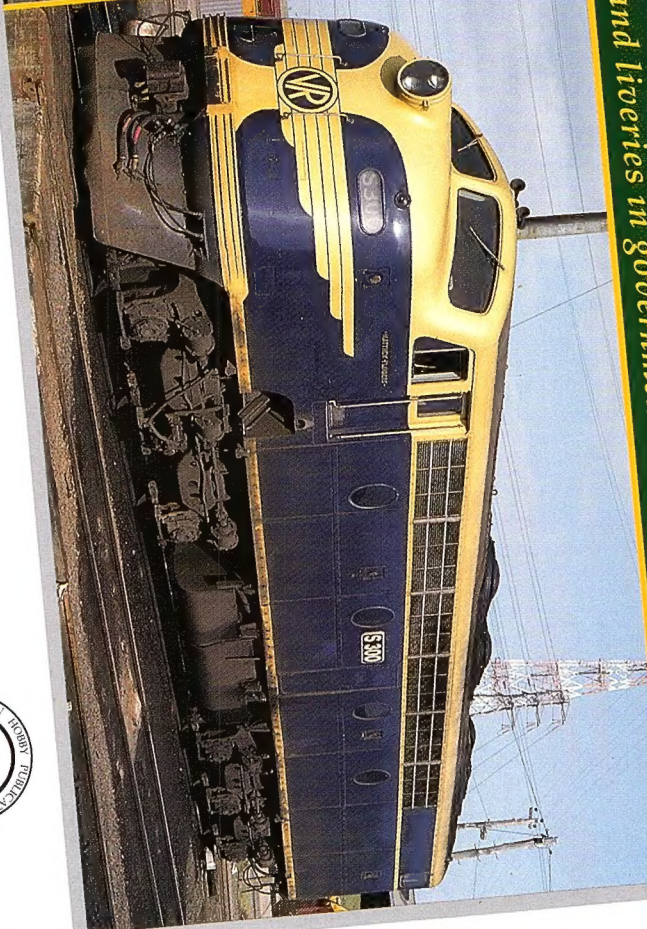
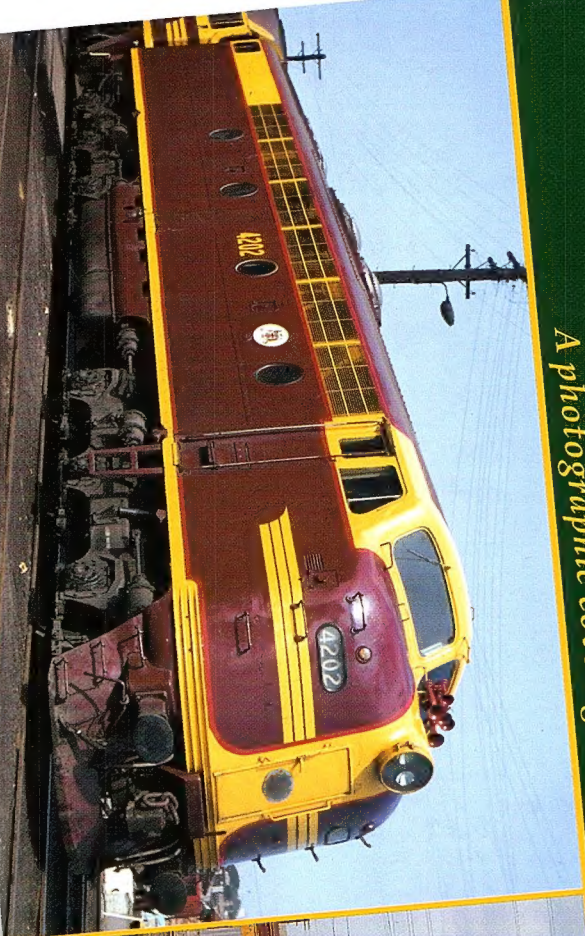
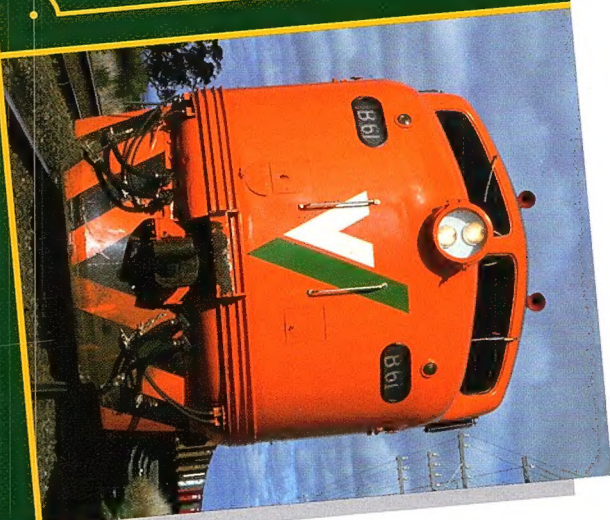
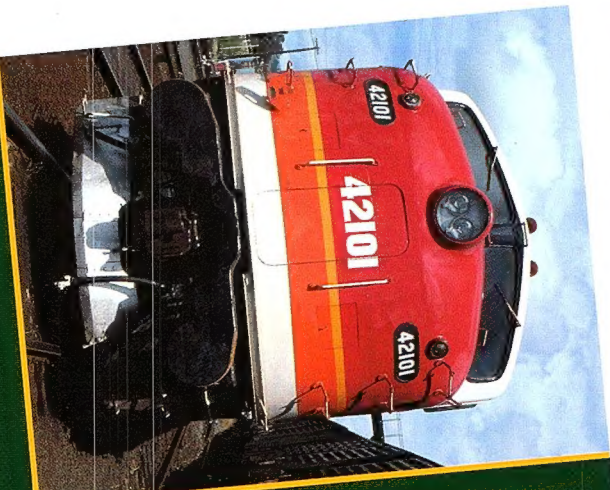
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